Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Peaceful uses of nuclear energy

Working paper submitted by Egypt

1. The peaceful use of nuclear energy is a fundamental pillar of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Article IV of the Treaty recognizes the inalienable right of all States parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. The Treaty affirms that the benefits of peaceful applications of nuclear technology should be available to all States parties and that they are entitled to exchange scientific information in order to develop those applications.

2. The use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes has progressively developed into a strategic necessity for many developing countries to meet demands for socioeconomic development. The promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be championed by all States parties to the Treaty, and they should be encouraged to maximize benefits in this field through mutual cooperation and assistance.

3. Despite the Non-Proliferation Treaty's unequivocal commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, there is concern over what seem to be continued attempts by some States parties to the Treaty to introduce measures that hinder the exchange of equipment, materials and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The inclination of some States parties to propose such measures runs contrary to the text and spirit of the Treaty by restricting international cooperation and limiting assistance in this field. This approach can only undermine the Treaty and erode its credibility.

4. The 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should encourage the accessibility of beneficial international exchanges and cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Curbing such exchanges will jeopardize the delicate balance between the rights and obligations of States parties under the Treaty. It is important to underscore that the Treaty does not prohibit in any way the use or transfer of nuclear technology, material or equipment for peaceful purposes based on sensitivity. Restricting the transfer of sensitive material and technology contravenes the Treaty, especially as all such material would be subject to the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

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5. International cooperation is crucial for facilitating the access of developing countries to the materials, equipment and scientific and technological information necessary for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The statute of IAEA stipulates the right of member States to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes and to promote socioeconomic development through technical cooperation, with due consideration for the needs of developing countries. We stress the importance of nuclear knowledge-sharing and the transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries to advance and expand their scientific and technological capabilities.

6. There is concern that some States parties to the Treaty are seeking to modify their export policies to make transfers of technology conditional upon additional obligations. Export control should not lead to the establishment of a discriminatory and selective regime that would impose restrictions on the transfer of nuclear materials, equipment and technology to developing countries. Rules and restrictions on transfers of technology and nuclear export controls that are imposed on non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty, especially developing countries, should be reversed. Such discriminatory and selective measures completely undermine the inalienable right guaranteed by article IV to the peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination.

7. Such actions also negate the bargain struck between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States based on the shared interest in preventing nuclear proliferation and not only considerably weaken one of the essential pillars of the Treaty but also erode the credibility of the Treaty as a whole.

8. Accordingly, the 2020 Review Conference should take the following actions:

(a) Affirm the inalienable right of all States parties to the Treaty to possess and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and acknowledge the right of States parties to the Treaty to participate in the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information;

(b) Urge States parties to the Treaty, especially developed countries, to increase IAEA resources and strengthen the Agency's technical and financial capabilities by endowing it with adequate funding so that it can carry out its Technical Cooperation Programme to respond to the needs of developing countries;

(c) Confirm that States parties to the Treaty should refrain from imposing any restrictions or limitations on the transfer of nuclear material, equipment or technology to States parties that have a comprehensive safeguards agreement in force;

(d) Call for the enforcement, without exception or further delay, of the total and complete prohibition, as stipulated in the Treaty, of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, resources and devices and the extension of assistance in the nuclear, scientific or technological fields to States that are not parties to the Treaty.